

# Israel's Unfaithfulness

Hosea 2:2-13

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3/3/2024

**BIG BEND  
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## Hosea 2:2-13 (NIV)

<sup>2</sup> “Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts. <sup>3</sup> Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst. <sup>4</sup> I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. <sup>5</sup> Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.’

<sup>6</sup> Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. <sup>7</sup> She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.’

<sup>8</sup> She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold—which they used for Baal.

<sup>9</sup> “Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her naked body.

<sup>10</sup> So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands.

<sup>11</sup> I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals.

<sup>12</sup> I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them. <sup>13</sup> I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot,” declares the Lord.

## v1 – Who is not a wife?

God paints Israel as an adulterous wife, who is no longer worthy to be considered a wife. This shows that the relationship was dramatically broken.

- Israel lewdly offered herself to other gods, in the way that a woman lewdly offers herself to lovers.

## What is meant by the *unfaithfulness from between her breasts*?

This may imply that she had laid bare her bosom to entice her lovers... If she did not change, she would be stripped naked, totally exposed (humiliated).

## What is meant by the threat to strip Israel naked and *make her like a desert*?

God warns Israel that if she would not put away her harlot-like ways, she would be judged. Though relationship was broken, blessing continued — but would be taken away if Israel did not turn.

## v4 – On whom would God not have mercy?

Israel’s children... If Israel is represented as an unfaithful wife, then her children represent the individual people of Israel. If they do not turn back to the LORD, they will experience God’s judgment.

## What is mercy?

Mercy describes a divine attribute of God’s nature—He is “rich in mercy” (Ephesians 2:4). Mercy is revealed in the actions God takes to relieve suffering and demonstrate His love.

- Mercy is such an exceptionally complex concept that several Hebrew and Greek words are used to express the dimensions of its meaning.
- Synonyms like compassion, lovingkindness, favor, and steadfast love often appear in Bible translations to illustrate the idea of mercy.

A brief biblical definition of mercy is “the gift of God’s undeserved kindness and compassion.”

- In God’s mercy, He withholds punishment from sinners even though they deserve it.
- God’s mercy also causes Him to give good gifts to those who are undeserving (grace!)

## What is the difference between mercy and grace?

Mercy and grace are closely related...

- Mercy has to do with God not punishing us as our sins deserve.
- Grace carries the idea of bestowing a gift or favor on the undeserving.

It may help to view mercy as a subset of grace (or visa-versa?)

### **Why is God's mercy & grace so amazing?**

It is so contrary to human reasoning... there is no free lunch. All religions of the world advocate salvation-by-works where we must earn God's favor for salvation.

- Biblical Christianity is the only religion where we are saved by belief in Christ's provision alone, there is nothing we can do to earn it.

### **v5 – How did Israel justify her adultery?**

Israel justified her harlotry because she received things from her "lovers." She looked at all the good she seemed to get from sin so it seemed like a good deal.

### **What principle did Israel not understand?**

Israel didn't understand the passing pleasures of sin...

Hebrews 11:25 – *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin*

### **Why do people pursue the temporal pleasures of sin not considering their eternal ramifications?**

- Selfishness – they are focused exclusively on themselves, not considering their Creator.
- They rationalize that there is plenty of time to get around to an eternal perspective.
- They have bought into the lie that this mortal life is all there is.

### **v6 – What would God do in response to Israel's unfaithfulness?**

To bring Israel to repentance, God promised to set a hedge of thorns on the sides of her path, so that it would hurt whenever Israel went off the correct path, and so the wrong paths would be hard to find.

### **What is the principle here that applies to us today?**

When God hedges our way with thorns, we usually don't like it. We sometimes think God is against us when the thorns hurt and we can't find the wrong paths. But it is really one of the sweetest expressions of God's love to hedge up your way with thorns and to wall us in.

### **How may we stay on the path God would have us take and avoid the thorns?**

God's Word is the resource He has provided us to stay on the path He has for us...

Psalm 119:105 – *Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.*

BIBLE – Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth

### **v7 – Why would Israel go back to the Lord?**

When the passing pleasures of sin are exposed, we often then see how good it was to follow the LORD. Our idols

seem attractive until God exposes them. Then we are ready to return to our first husband, the LORD.

### **v8 – What didn't Israel know?**

Even when Israel went after other gods, the Lord still provided for her. This showed His great, unselfish love to Israel. Even though Israel took what God provided and prepared it for Baal, He still loved them.

- The principle is how offensive idolatry is to God, giving to an idol what we've received from Him.

### **v9 – What else would God do in response to Israel's unfaithfulness?**

God gave grain to Israel, and she gave what He provided in sacrifices to Baal. So, God would take away this provision, and as Israel felt her need and deprivation — perhaps she would then turn back to the LORD.

### **v10 – How did God expose Israel to her lovers?**

Israel embraced the idols of other countries so God raised up those countries to oppress her.

### **v11-12 – What would be the result of God exposing Israel to her lovers?**

They would be forced to cease their religious practices at the temple and their agricultural prosperity would end. Their land would also become like an unkept wilderness.

### **v13 – What had Israel forgot?**

Her Provider... Israel enjoyed great prosperity during the time of Jeroboam II. But she used her prosperity for idolatry and the pursuit of ungodly pleasures, so God would take away her prosperity.

### **What is the principle here that applies to us today?**

When we forget about God, He will give us over to whatever we are putting in His place. And worshiping idols always has consequences...

Romans 1:21-23 – *although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

### **What applications come to mind from this passage?**

- God's mercy & grace is a blessing; share it!
- The temporal pleasures of sin are a trap; embrace an eternal perspective.
- God guides our path with thorns or His Word; chose the less painful way.
- Sin always has consequences; return to God to avoid them!